

NAEB

PRESIDENT'S MEMO

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF EDUCATIONAL BROADCASTERS

1346 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.

Washington 6, D. C.

Phone North 7-6000

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I have just read with interest the January issue of the Carnegie Corporation Quarterly, which is devoted to Education and Politics. Since many thoughts contained therein echo some ideas I have been trying to express recently, I have chosen to reprint the lead article.

There are some perfectly decent words that nice Americans seldom use together in the same phrase. "Education" and "politics" are two of them. While each word is quite all right on its own (although education is considered to be superior because it is "spiritual" while politics is "crass"), the two in combination seem to conjure up images of graft, corruption, and even "propagandizing."

Actually, the notion that politics and education should not have anything to do with each other is based on a misunderstanding both of politics and of the role of education in a democracy and how that role is determined. And the idea that they do not have anything to do with each other flies in the face of the facts.

Public education is paid for by public funds, and public funds are raised, and allocated, through the political process. Through this process, the community--as small as the township, as large as the nation--decides both the total amount it is prepared to spend for a host of public benefits, and how the total amount will be split up among them all. In short, the political forum is where the citizenry fights about the things it cares about; it is where the public assigns priorities and establishes its values in rank order.

Not everyone comprehends this trading out of interests in the political market place. That is one reason why many political decisions do not in fact reflect accurately the most widely held public values but do often reflect those of "interests" which understand the political process very well indeed. In these cases, where does the fault lie except with those who are either too lazy or too naive to press the case effectively for their own "interests"?

For the basic importance of the inseparability of politics and education is not the fact that public money supports public education but what that fact represents: that the education of its youth is a primary interest of the nation. And the nation has many legitimate concerns--for defense, health, highways, and welfare, as well as education. The equitable allocation of resources in support of these interests is an extraordinarily intricate--and political--business.

The Quarterly also reviews a book called "National Politics and Federal Aid to Education," (Syracuse University Press), which makes some points relevant to the ETV facilities legislation and the problems of rallying support for the authorization of the appropriation.

"One of the problems in pushing legislation has been that although widespread public opinion favors federal aid, it is only mildly interested in it; it is not a hot vote-getting issue. Masters and his colleagues find the same phenomenon at the state level and remark that, although everybody is "for" the schools, legislators who champion the cause feel that they make little political hay out of their efforts.

"In the presence of wide public support and the absence of loud public noise for legislation, the burden of pushing it has of course fallen (as it does on every issue really) on the particular groups interested in the subject and the allies they are able to rally within the government.

"Many people have feared that federal aid would lead to undesirable forms of control over the content of education--the worst of their fears being that political figures or parties could use the educational system for ideological indoctrination. These fears persist among some people although virtually all advocates of aid, within and without the government, have specifically denied the wish to control or even to influence education."

As you know, the ETV bill specifically forbids the Federal government to interfere with or have any part in the formulation of programming for the ETV stations; Federal involvement is limited to providing funds for equipment.

All of this may seem to you like warming over well-cooked material, but the fact is that the fight for Federal assistance for ETV is far from won. The arguments which were used to oppose enactment of the legislation will be brought up to prevent the appropriation and those who favor this assistance are going to have to answer such arguments and, in addition, point out in cogent fashion the importance and worth of this program to education and our society.

On The Shores of Lake Mendota

Radio "old timers" will remember that years ago the University of Wisconsin used to hold an annual summer institute on educational radio. People came from all over the U. S. and Canada to talk with and listen to such people as Andrew Allen, Director of Drama for the CBC, Ed Kobak, then President of Mutual, and Cliff Durr, then FCC Commissioner. These were important meetings during the early growth of educational radio.

On a recent visit to Madison, I talked with H. B. McCarty, the organizer of the Institute, and about convinced him* that the time is ripe to reactivate the Institute --at least for one session.

It seems to me that the radio people are ready and eager to move, to act, to take initiative. For a spell they have been rocked back by the sudden burgeoning of television in education. But now it's time to take stock; to mutually assess and document the special capabilities and economical virtues of radio; to develop new applications of radio to education; and to map out its development as a complement to or in conjunction with ETV.

I maintained that NAEB radio people would be willing to come to such a meeting in Madison this summer without grants or scholarships--either at their own or their institution's expense. Mac has agreed to consider hosting such a meeting and has assigned WHA Program Supervisor Cliff Eilen the task of investigating dates, facilities, etc. If his findings are favorable, the appropriate NAEB Committees will be turned loose on developing arrangements and agenda.

NAEB Meets with FCC

One afternoon, recently, the main hearing room of the FCC was taken over for an NAEB presentation on its digital computer analysis of the UHF spectrum. At the suggestion of Hyman Goldin and Larry Frymire, of the FCC Research and Education Division, NAEB brought in its engineering consultant, Oscar Reed (Jansky & Bailey) and Kenneth Heisler and James Kallenborn (Atlantic Research), who programmed the computer, to explain the procedures which had been followed and to answer questions. A group of about 25 people were present, including, in addition to the NAEB group, the engineering assistants to all the Commissioners and Ivar Parker, of the Rules and Standards Division.

At the conclusion of the three-hour session, Parker complimented the NAEB on "a pioneering achievement" and indicated that the findings would be invaluable to the Commission in its over-all restructuring of the assignment table..

More importantly, the FCC, impressed with the possibilities of the computer in spectrum studies, has (1) moved to acquire one of its own, and (2) gone of its own volition to the USOE to request that it give further funds to NAEB to add to its original study the tabus occasioned by international agreements with Canada and Mexico regarding frequency assignments along our national borders.

Hearings on ETV Appropriations

The word is that the House subcommittee on Deficiencies and Supplements (see President's Memo for February) will take up the request for the \$2 million ETV facilities appropriation within the next two weeks.

*Letters from NAEB radio people would be persuasive; if you think this is a good idea, send a note to Mac.

The hearings before the House Appropriations Committee on the \$7 million request for the 1964 fiscal year will come up in mid-March.

NAEB is currently conducting a survey among the states to determine the extent of state appropriations which may lapse by June 30th unless Federal matching funds become available by that time.

Dates and Events of Interest

March 17-19 NAEB Region III Conference--Kellogg Center, University of Chicago.
March 19-21 NETRC Affiliates Committee Meeting, Park Sheraton Hotel, New York City.
March 29-30 NAEB Region II Conference, International Inn, Tampa, Florida.
March 31-April 3 NAB Convention, Conrad Hilton Hotel, Chicago.

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